

October MBPAC Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 9:35am. Eric Brenner started introductions.

In attendance:

Laura Beck (State Police), Eric Brenner (chair), Steve Carr (DNR), Bob Gaston, Deborah Grinnage-Pulley (MSDE), Scott Hansen (MDP), Greg Hinchcliffe, Jon Morrison, Erin Penniston (DHMH), Kevin Racine, Anne Kyle (Commerce), Pat Sheehan, Jim Titus, Cari Watrous (DoD), John Wetmore, Dennis Schrader (MDOT), Curtis Johnson (MDOT), Tony Campbell (MDOT/SHA), Kate Atkinson (MDOT), L'Kiesha Markley (MDOT/SHA), Nate Evans, Emily Ranson, Michael Jackson, Dep. Sec. Dennis Schrader, Kate Sylvester

Deputy Secretary Dennis said that MBPAC was making some changes and wanted to re-energize the committee. Tony Campbell was announced as the new SHA lead running the bike program, Curtis Johnson is the new MDOT staff to the committee.

Eric introduced himself as a biking enthusiast and former state employee who had previously not combined these two interests. He hopes the meetings are less formal with more public input from a wider group of people. In his one-on-one conversations with committee members he's asked state agencies how the committee can better meet their needs, and how changes can be made to increase value for all committee members.

Most future meetings will be held outside of the MDOT offices. The December meeting will be on the MARC bike train, and the February meeting will be held in conjunction with the Bike Maryland symposium in Annapolis, with the next meeting at MDOT not being held until October 2016.

Dennis talked about the logistics of where he wants this work placed in the Secretary's office. Bike/Ped is huge policy area and affects MVA, MTA, MDTA...it cuts across all MDOT operations. We want more focus on pedestrian safety. Of our 400 fatalities - 100 are pedestrians; Secretary Rahn is very concerned. The committee should have an integrated process with SHA (Tony Campbell) on safety issues.

Before discussion continued on locations for 2016 meetings, the previous minutes were approved.

Steve (DNR) noted that in the past some members of state agencies will vote on positions before the committee and that most feel uncomfortable. He thinks it's not appropriate for DNR to tell MDOT what to do. Eric noted that there would be fewer votes of any kind going forward, conducive with an inclusive committee that has the goal of providing advice that is listened to by state agencies.

Eric discussed 2016 meetings, hoping that more of the state agencies get involved in planning the meetings, providing opportunities to get us outside of MDOT and engage more people

April/June meeting might be in Western Maryland (Planning - Bill Atkinson, Commerce)-- possibly piggybacking on a meeting with the canal towns or something else involving the C&O canal national historic park.

Steve said that the Western Maryland rail trail, and Hancock (with a 4.5 mile extension coming on line) might be better for a June meeting. April weather being less predictable.

Another potential meeting location is in Silver Spring - at Toole Design, which is the largest company in the US working on bike trail work with a conference room big enough to host the committee.

August could be a pedestrian safety themed meeting, possibly on the Eastern Shore, coordinate with (or part of) the MACo conference in Ocean City. Dennis was hopeful that we would not have to register people for the MACo conference if we have a panel. More discussion on future meetings having both a theme and an objective.

Discussion on the traditional role of sub-committees and moving to express any group opinion by a vote. John led a discussion on the timing of review work dealing with legislation, and how timing was important to allow for both review and to have an impact on decisions. Citizen members can always discuss/shop legislation with individual members as they have done in the past.

Kevin wanted to make sure that issues of interest to the disability community continue to be an important part of the committee, as they have been in the past.

Potential of allowing for call-in by committee members was discussed, with 50% attendance expected of all committee members. As a practical matter, maybe having something more flexible could be conducive to the committee being more productive, and to shifting some of the focus back on the agencies.

Other ideas discussed were on achieving bike access on toll bridges, and asking the MD Public Service Commission to send a representative to discuss public utility right of way access issues.

Dennis talked about MDOT having 10,500 employees and the Secretary wanting a "one MDOT" approach to keep the entire agency working together and speaking with one voice on issues like bike/ped.

Cari noted that Linda Singer had retired from SHA, previously the lead person on all disability issues, and questions were raised over who will take on her role, and making sure that the disability community stays involved with SHA as they continue their work on pedestrian safety issues.

Many counties also have local advisory groups for pedestrians, and they too should stay connected to SHA in some way.

Kate talked about the recent bike/ped grant announcements made by MDOT. Eric said that last year's community outreach meetings for groups interested in applying for these grants were well run and well attended. In response to a question, Kate said that RTP/TAP (federal) money funds most programs; Pathways grants are exclusively for pedestrian issues. Another comment was that people can be scared of the federal requirements and often focus on the grants that are mostly state funding. Another question was whether money could be front-loaded for design to help local jurisdictions better prepare to make grant applications. This could also be a training issue at upcoming MML and MACo sessions (workshops).

State agency reports.

Erin: DHMH works mostly on the public health side, disease prevention, and operates on CDC federal grant money. State and local public health action grants are made, and community walking plans are a priority of DHMH and CDC. Looking at target communities across the state.

Scott: Planning has a transit-oriented-development focus, with livable mixed use communities and last mile connections. Also use GIS tools to help with things like location of bikeshare systems.

Deborah: Education talked about how counties write their own curricula which impacts on bike/ped issues through PE classes.

Cari: Dept. of Disabilities helps on accessibility issues

Anne: Commerce, via tourism, works on promoting biking/hiking opportunities, getting people to go more than 50 miles from their home. Discussion on economic impact of biking and pedestrians. Bike Maryland's transition paper was mentioned as a place where the various economic impacts of biking are listed.

Laura: State Police works on education and enforcement of the law in their office of strategic planning. They have reviewed the potential revisions to the 3-foot law.

Steve: DNR's new leadership hit the ground running and is strongly supportive of trails contributing to economic activity in rural areas. Regional meetings will be held as follow-up to the Maryland Trails Summit (first one will be in Western MD). The goal will be to come up with 5 priority projects in each region. DNR has maps available for smart phones. Gaps in trails a priority, with the Susquehanna River crossing being a top priority for DNR; glad to see that Hatem bridge is being reevaluated as an option for long distance bikers. Baltimore County also needs to connect the trail that starts in York, PA to Baltimore City.

L'Kiesha: SHA is working internally on PRSA (?) to help identify communities in need of improved pedestrian safety. Looking at both short term and long term improvements as a result of these studies.

Sub-committee chairs were asked to comment on any topics that were not covered by the agency reports.

- a. T&P Sept 19th travel journalists from the UK (the Telegraph) to visited C&O.
- b. E&A: Wed 7th - Walk Maryland day, hope to increase participation in future years
- c. C&T - Nate said that he met with MdTA admin on Hatem bridge, Maryland's bikeways grant to the city, Greg talked about the mayor's bicycle advisory committee, expediting the project review process with SHA.
Next steps in the bicycle master plan. Kevin Plank is funding some bikeway improvements around his UA facility.

A meeting is planned on the 3 feet passing. The Exelon/Pepco merger held-up by D.C. regulator which if approved includes a bike trail under utility right of way in suburban DC. John thought that Montgomery County will move forward with the new trail regardless of the final decision by the regulators.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.